GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:131
ANSWERED ON:25.02.2009
ERADICATION OF LEPROSY
Paraste Shri Dalpat Singh

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a slow progress in the leprosy eradication programme undertaken in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any study in this regard;

(d) if so, the details of the findings and the response of the Government thereto;

(e) the efforts made by the Government to check the discrimination against the people suffering from this disease; and

(f) the efforts made by the Government in creating awareness among the people in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS)
(a)to(f): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 131 FOR 25TH FEBRUARY, 2009

(a)&b) The National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) has achieved remarkable progress in reducing the burden of Leprosy in the country. The number of registered Leprosy cases have come down from 39,46,516 (with Prevalence Rate of 57.60/10,000 population) in March 1981 to 87,206 (Prevalence Rate 0.74/10,000) in March 2008. The progress of NLEP reflected by the comparative state-wise Prevalence Rate during 1981 and 2008 is at Annexure − I. The number of annual new cases detected have also reduced from 4,82,000 in the year 1981 to 1,37,685 in 2007-08. India achieved the goal of elimination of Leprosy as a public health problem, defined as less than 1 case per 10,000 population at National level in December, 2005, as set by National Health Policy, 2002.

29 States/UTs have also achieved Leprosy elimination status. Only 6 States / UTs viz. Bihar, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chandigarh and D&N Haveli are yet to achieve elimination.

(c) An independent evaluation of NLEP was carried out by Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR), Jaipur, during February − May 2005 to assess the programme achievement status at the close of World Bank supported Second National Leprosy Elimination Project. (d) Details of findings of the study and the response of the Government is at Annexure − II. Another study to assess quantitative & qualitative achievements made under different components of the programme until March 2007 was carried out in 2008. The findings of the study is at Annexure III. (e) Following efforts have been made by Government to check the discrimination against people suffering from leprosy:
(i) Leprosy services have been integrated with general health care services through Primary Health Centres, Community Health Centres and Government Hospitals all over the country. (ii) Through efforts of Government, the Lepers' Act, discriminating against persons affected with leprosy, was repealed in 1985.
(iii) The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, as the nodal agency, has already taken initiative for amendment of various discriminatory acts/laws against the persons affected with leprosy. The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has taken up the issues with Ministries concerned for their consideration and suitable action.
(iv) Reconstructive surgery (RCS) services for correction of disability in persons affected with leprosy are being accelerated by inclusion of more centres conducting RCS. Correction of visible disability will further help in reducing social stigma and discrimination against leprosy affected persons. (v) Government of India has given guidelines to all the State Governments to work towards reduction of stigma and discrimination under various programme activities.

(f) Government of India has intensified Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities in all the states including the behavior change communication by launching Intensive IEC Campaign. The theme of campaign is 'Towards Leprosy Free India' which aims at further reduction of stigma and discrimination against persons affected by leprosy.Awareness is created by mass media, rural & outdoor media and advocacy meetings. Messages regarding signs and symptoms of the disease, availability of free treatment, complete curability of the disease and importance of early treatment are highlighted. It is also being emphasized that Leprosy is like any other disease and there should not be discrimination against leprosy affected persons.